

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
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Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, February 5, 2008

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Child neglect probe faces woman who refused to pick up son after fleeing crash

Mom, son were in car driven by boy's drunk uncle.

By Michael P. McConnell
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

FERNDALE - An Oak Park woman who ran from a car crash in which she and her son, 15, were passengers faces investigation for possible child neglect.

Police said the woman, 34, refused to pick her son up from the police station after they reached her later by phone. Ferndale police said the son was bleeding from the mouth after he and his mother were in a car driven by the boy's uncle that crashed into a parked car last Thursday near Hyland and Lewiston streets.

"We can't figure out why in the world she ran from the crash scene and why she refused to pick her son up," said Ferndale Lt. William Wilson. "We have turned the case over to the county's Child Protective Services for investigation of child neglect."

Wilson added that the woman has no outstanding warrants and they were not aware of her committing any crimes.

"We have no idea why she ran," Wilson said.

A witness called police after seeing the crash and watching the mother and son flee on foot while the boy's uncle attempted to drive off, police said. The mother eluded police but the uncle, 41, was arrested and taken from his 1992 Oldsmobile, which didn't have a valid license plate. The driver was drunk and there was a container of open alcohol in the car, police said.

Police officers stopped the boy as he ran from the scene. He was bleeding from the mouth and fought with an officer, throwing punches and kicking. The boy faces a charge of resisting a police officer in county juvenile court.

The driver's mouth was bleeding and police are waiting for the results of a blood test to determine how much the man had been drinking, Wilson said. The driver was released from police custody pending the issuance of a warrant formally charging him.

Police said they want to charge the driver with driving while intoxicated with a child in the car, leaving the scene of an injury accident, driving on a suspended license, and having open intoxicants in his car.

Contact Michael P. McConnell at mike.mcconnell@dailytribune.com or at (248) 591-2571.

DHS Child Support Database Paying Dividends

Melanie Trusty, Capital News Service

February 4, 2008

More than half a million Michigan children are entitled to child support, and one in four received nothing in 2006, one expert says.

Child support makes a huge difference to these families, said Jane Zehnder-Merrell, a senior research associate for the Michigan League for Human Services, a nonprofit organization.

And after the non-custodial parent makes court-ordered payments, it's important that the money gets to the children, Zehnder-Merrell said.

"The Department of Human Services has provided an online database for almost a year to help custodial parents find unclaimed child support", said Maureen Sorbet, a media relations person for the department.

"Sometimes we lose track," Sorbet said.

Parents have used the database to recover more than \$450,000 in unclaimed funds since last March, Sorbet said.

Parents who believe they are entitled to unclaimed funds can search the database, she said. Users are instructed to enter their child's name and the last four digits of their Social Security number.

Sorbet said if search results show money is owed, parents must need to verify the information with their local Friend of the Court office.

League figures show that 531,086 children under 19 were entitled to child support in 2006. Of them, 141,806 collected nothing.

In some cases, the non-custodial parents failed to pay at all. In other cases, non-custodial parents paid the Friend of Court offices but the money wasn't transferred to the children.

Since the database tool started, almost 1,000 parents have recovered funds owed to them, she said.

Sorbet said it may take two weeks for the court to process a claim, and if the match is positive, the money can be distributed in a lump sum.

Zehnder-Merrell said that most custodial parents are single and it's critical they have these resources because their rate of poverty is seven times higher than the rate for married couples.

Distribution of funds could be stalled because the custodial parent did not report a change of residency, she said.

Generally, that's the case for low-income single parents who move their family more often, she said.

"It's excellent that they created such a program to act as an avenue for parents to find these funds," Zehnder-Merrell said.

Sorbet added that the database is a great tool and allows Friend of the Court offices to update their records.

"We can ensure future funds go to the proper people and get there more quickly," Sorbet said.

Kelli Van Dyken, a co-coordinator of the Kent County chapter of the Association for Children for Enforcement of Support Inc., said her nonprofit organization wants parents to be aggressive so they can collect their unclaimed child support.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Free health events for minority women

Tuesday, February 05, 2008

Seminars focused on the health needs of women of color and minority women are coming up in February and April through the University of Michigan Health System.

The Women's Health Seminar Series opens with a session addressing women's concerns about diabetes across cultures. The event, which begins at 6 p.m. on Feb. 28 at the Ann Arbor Community Center, is offered in partnership with the Health System's Minority Health Research Program and the Program for Multicultural Health.

The second health seminar in the series, designed to serve the health information needs of Latinas, will be April 6 at 12:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Ypsilanti. This session will be conducted in Spanish by Dr. Sara Frost and Joanne Bailey, both from the U-M Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. This health seminar, "Promoviendo la salud integral en las mujeres Latinas," will focus on depression and diabetes in women.

More seminars from U-M's Women's Health Program are being planned for 2008 and will focus on the unique health information needs of African-American, Asian-American, Latina and Arab-American women.

"We hope to engage a growing number of diverse women in the very communities they live in, and to support these women in their quest for optimum health for themselves and for their families," said Angela Johnson, who is organizing the series.

All seminars are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Angela Johnson, minority outreach coordinator, at 734-615-3799 or angejohn@umich.edu.

Ann Arbor News staff

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Beecher School District adds program to address teen pregnancy

by Shena Abercrombie | The Flint Journal

Monday February 04, 2008, 8:04 PM

BEECHER -- Dollene Turner, parent of a sixth-grader in the Beecher School District, said she knew something had to be done when a classmate of her daughter became pregnant.

"It hurt my heart, she was still in elementary school," said Turner, a parent volunteer. "I just wanted to cry. I've seen them before, young girls who are pregnant -- but to see one so young. I'm for any program that will help."

District officials agree, and recently voted to participate in the Carrera project, a national adolescent pregnancy prevention model, proven to cut births among teen parents in half.

Teens who get pregnant before graduating from high school tend to have a higher rate of drop outs, lower levels of income and are less likely to attend college.

"We are not the only ones taken aback by teenage pregnancy," said Beecher Middle/High School Principal Jerri Lynn Williams. "This is something we don't want to happen because we want our young people to have their whole lives ahead of them, unencumbered until they're old enough and mature enough to handle that."

Michele Talarico, program coordinator for the Flint-area Carrera Program, said Carrera's scientific approach has the national statistics to back up its success. The Flint program is separate from the project planned for Beecher, although based on the same model.

"It's a long-term program so the outcomes are at the end, but in the interim we do some measuring," she said. "If you look at the national statistics, our kids are below the national average in being sexually active, and below the average in use of alcohol, illegal drugs and cigarettes."

Mott Children's Health is partnering with the Children's Aid Society for the Beecher model, and it is expected to either be the first in the area to integrate the Carrera program into its regular school day curriculum or to create a "Saturday School" similar to a charter school, that meets twice per month. The program tracks a cohort of fifth grade girls and boys through high school graduation, and beyond.

It uses seven components to create a "holistic" approach to sex education -- which includes education, employment, family life and sexuality education, self-expression, lifetime individual sports, full medical and dental care, and mental health services.

The Carrerra Program also has a presence in Flint. Priority Children of Flint is the host organization for Talarico's program, and it uses funding from the Ruth Mott Foundation and Community Foundation, as well as some private funding.

Unlike the plan for Beecher, it is an after school program and not affiliated directly with the Flint School District, although Flint students were recruited to participate when it began in the summer of 2003.

"Flint has had and continues to have a high rate of teen pregnancy -- higher than the county, state and national rate," said Talarico.

Soup's on!

PUBLISHED: February 3, 2008



Photos: E.L. Conley

Soup Day 2008, an annual fund-raiser for the Salvation Army's Downriver food programs sponsored by the Holiday Inn-Southgate and The News-Herald Newspapers, brought out 650 hungry diners to share soup from nearly 25 local restaurants and

caterers on
Wednesday. The
event raised \$5,500.
The winner in the
Best Soup category
for the fourth year in
a row was Pete's
Place with its Loaded
Baked Potato Soup.
Serving it up (above)
are Angie Beck (left),
Christine
Lindermann and Pete
Ochab. Best Display
winner was the
Hungarian Rhapsody,
and the Most Unique
Soup winner was
Kola's Food Factory
& Catering with its
Cream of French
Toast Soup. Second
place in Best Display
went to Famous

Dave's Barbecue, represented (left) by Wilbur the pig, who's being fed soup by Sharon Savoie of Allen Park, and the third-place winner for display was the Holiday Inn-Southgate with its international theme.

CAA curtails heat assistance in Delta County

Escanaba Daily Press

POSTED: February 5, 2008

ESCANABA — The Community Action Agency won't offer heating assistance until later this month.

Cathy Pearson, CAA executive assistant, announced this morning that due to increased demand and reduced available resources, emergency fuel assistance in Delta County is immediately suspended until after the Feb. 23 Walk for Warmth. Pearson said increased fuel prices, cold weather and the local economy, along with the reduced availability of funding caused the agency to rapidly expend available revenues.

Delta County residents faced with heating emergencies should contact the Department of Human Services at 786-5394. The CAA will resume heat assistance Feb. 25 for as long as Walk for Warmth funds last. The annual Walk for Warmth raises money for heating assistance. There is still a limited amount of funding available in Menominee and Schoolcraft counties.

IN OUR OPINION

Extend jobless benefits to help economy

February 5, 2008

The U.S. Senate is at a crossroads on how to handle an economic stimulus package. The majority that wants to extend unemployment pay should stick to its guns.

Extra jobless pay is considered one of the most effective ways to get more money moving through the economy. A recent analysis at Moody's Economy.com found that every \$1 put out to the unemployed stirs up \$1.64 in new economic activity. That's second only to the return on increased spending on food stamps, which generates \$1.73.

Advertisement

By comparison, a tax payout program leads to \$1.26 in economic boost per dollar -- and if low-income families are excluded, it's only \$1.02.

Just as important as the economic stimulus, moreover, is the need to acknowledge the pain in the job market. Job hunts are taking longer, and retraining is often essential in states such as Michigan where manufacturing is declining. Laid-off workers and their families deserve more of a cushion than the 26 weeks now available, at a maximum of \$362 a week here.

Joblessness now is on the increase nationwide. Michigan's unemployment rate, 7.2% in 2007, already has been projected to average 7.7% this year.

The legislation under discussion would extend benefits by 13 weeks, and add 13 more weeks for states that exceed a 6.5% jobless rate. Michigan would benefit immediately.

Extended aid to the jobless would kick in as soon as legislation passes, another reason to take the Senate proposal seriously. Tax payouts, the centerpiece of the proposal President George W. Bush has blessed, will go out at the earliest in mid-May.

Michigan could use this economic boost more than other states -- and it would be wise not to make the other ones suffer economic trauma on the scale Michigan is experiencing.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080205/OPINION01/802050327>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Tuesday, February 5, 2008

Budget bleak for Michigan

State leaders pan Bush's plan, its proposed cuts to federal programs, continued funding of war in Iraq.

Deb Price and David Shepardson / The Detroit News

WASHINGTON -- Reeling from manufacturing job losses, the nation's highest unemployment rate and increasing demands on public safety nets, Michigan got bleak news Monday from President Bush's \$3.1 trillion 2009 budget plan.

The president's budget arrives at a Democratic Congress with different priorities, as both parties head into a high-stakes presidential election year.

U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Dearborn, called the budget "mostly dead on arrival." U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, who sits on the Senate Budget Committee, accused the president of paying for the Iraq war at the expense of badly needed programs.

"This budget is completely out of touch with the needs of middle income families in Michigan," Stabenow said. "The president has been funding the war at \$12 billion a month while giving tax cuts to the privileged few."

Under Bush's plan, the state would see a big cut in its energy assistance to the poor, dropping from \$106.7 million to \$91.6 million in the budget year that begins Oct. 1. Currently, 445,000 Michigan households depend on that to pay for heat.

The White House said Michigan will get \$5.5 billion in Medicaid funding in 2008, and an increase to \$5.75 billion in 2009. But Dan Beatte, the director of Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Washington office, says the state actually expects \$6.1 billion in the current year, meaning the president's proposal would be a net cut of \$350 million.

"This budget extends our challenges and does nothing to help us advance our economic recovery goals," Beattie said, noting that 1.6 million people in Michigan, or 1 in 7 residents depend on Medicaid.

Bush defended his budget proposal, saying Congress must take steps to reign in the growth of entitlement programs. "Our budget protects America and it encourages economic growth," he said.

The Energy Department proposed flat vehicle research to \$221 million, down from \$223 million this year, but funding for hydrogen fuel cell vehicle research will take a significant hit, dropping from \$211 million to \$146 million. Hybrid systems research would be boosted to \$103 million, up from \$94 million.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration would add \$2 million and double its staff dedicated to writing new fuel economy regulations in the wake of the energy bill passed in December that requires automakers to increase fuel economy to an industry-wide 35 miles per gallon by 2020.

For the nation overall, Bush proposes \$515.4 billion for defense, an increase of about 7 percent from last year, and another \$70 billion to fund the Iraq war. He also includes \$145 billion to stimulate the economy. Bush also wants to scale back spending increases in Medicare to 5 percent from 7.2 percent, saving \$178 billion over five years.

And he proposed eliminating two programs that aid manufacturers:

The \$89.6 million Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which helps small to medium-sized businesses with new technologies, would get \$4 million to shut down. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, called that a big mistake. "For a small investment, we get a big return. This helps small businesses in a state like Michigan remain competitive," Rogers said.

The Advance Technology Program -- which gives awards to companies, universities and nonprofits to conduct research and development on projects that would benefit the nation -- would be slashed from \$70 million to \$6 million.

On No Child Left Behind funding for public schools, Michigan would see a modest increase of \$9 million above the current \$775 million. But Granholm officials noted that level would be far below what Congress originally authorized to help states.

Michigan would get modest increases in several food programs, including the school breakfast and lunch programs for needy kids.

Bush also proposes a big cut to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which pays for upgrades to sewage systems, reducing it by \$134 million to \$555 million nationwide, according to the Northeast-Midwest Institute. Sewage overflows into the Great Lakes cause algae blooms that lead to fish kills.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080205/METRO/802050331>

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Michigan Heart Gallery 2008 Exhibit Kicks Off in Lansing
Public to view professional portraits of Michigan foster children
who are waiting to be adopted.

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

The grand opening of the 2008 Michigan Heart Gallery. There are more than 4,000 children in Michigan waiting to be adopted. More than 60 of these children will be featured in a heart-warming photographic exhibit called the Michigan Heart Gallery.

The Michigan Heart Gallery is a collaborative effort between the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, the Adoptive Family Support Network and the Michigan Department of Human Services. The photographs in the Heart Gallery were taken by dozen's of Michigan's top professional Photographers who donated their time, talent and resources to take Portraits that help capture the spirit of children in the foster care system.

Thursday, February 14, 2008
Exhibit: 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Kickoff program: Noon

Capitol Building
First Floor Rotunda
Lansing, MI

Speakers include:
First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern
Director, Children's Services Administration, Permanency Division,
Michigan Department of Human Services
Heart Gallery photographers
Several children who are in the foster care system waiting for adoption